



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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This manual section is about New Jersey children who run away within the boundaries of New Jersey. For policy and procedures concerning runaways from New Jersey to another state or from another state to New Jersey, see [CP&P-VIII-E-1-100](#) and [CP&P-VIII-E-1-200](#).

Definitions 11-2-87

A non-delinquent child is a child who has not been adjudicated delinquent and has no standing complaints against him.

A runaway is a child who voluntarily leaves his place of residence without the consent of his parent, legal guardian, individual, or agency responsible for his care.

A New Jersey child is a child under the age of 18 whose principal place of residence is in New Jersey.

Residence refers to that place where a home is maintained by the child's parent, guardian, person or agency entitled to the legal custody of the child.

A stranded child is a child unaccompanied by an adult but not believed to be a runaway.

Non-Delinquent Runaways Within the County 11-2-87

When a child runs away but does not leave his county of residence, the Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Unit in that county is responsible for the child unless the child is currently under CP&P supervision. See the CIU/CP&P/Family Part Agreement.

Responsibility of CP&P 11-2-87

CP&P is responsible for facilitating the return of a non-delinquent child who is a New Jersey resident, and who runs away from one county to another and for ensuring that all efforts are made to effect such a child's immediate return home. The child's parent or guardian is responsible for paying for the cost of the child's return. CP&P pays for the return of a New Jersey runaway only under certain circumstances. See Non-Delinquent Runaways Within the County, above.

When a non-delinquent child runs away from one county to another, the two Local Offices are mutually responsible for effecting the child's return. The situation is discussed and specific arrangements, based on what is most feasible, are made between the two offices involved. The CIU/CP&P/Family Part Agreement specifies that this is CP&P's responsibility. The CIU's refer such cases to CP&P. See the CIU/CP&P/Family Part Agreement.

Whenever a Local Office receives a referral indicating that a runaway child has been located, the following are determined:

- the child's principal place of residence;
- the legal status of the child, i.e., is the child a delinquent currently under the court's jurisdiction,
- whether the child is under the supervision of CP&P, and if so, which office supervises the child;
- whether the child is under the supervision of any other social service agency; and
- whether the child's parent or guardian has been contacted.

If another social service agency other than the CIU is primarily responsible for supervising the child, the CP&P Local Office receiving the referral on an out of county runaway requests that the other agency assume responsibility for contacting the child's family and for arranging the child's return. CP&P assists in these arrangements whenever necessary for out of county runaways.

A stranded child may be considered abandoned as defined in [CP&P-II-C-5-700](#) and receive services based on his need for protective services or based on policy and procedures for runaways. CP&P facilitates the return of these children to those persons responsible for their care.

Involvement of Probation and Parole 11-2-87

Running away is not a criminal offense in New Jersey. However, a runaway may already be involved or may become involved with a law enforcement agency.

Running away for more than twenty-four hours constitutes a juvenile-family crisis, N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22.

When the child is an escapee, absconder, or delinquent, the responsibility for arranging for the child's return rests with the county Probation Department or the Bureau of Parole, whichever is supervising the child. For definitions of these terms, see [CP&P-VIII-E-1-100](#). When CP&P receives a request for assistance on behalf of a runaway who is an escapee, absconder, or delinquent, the request is referred to that agency supervising the child.

Involvement of Group Homes and Residential Facilities 11-2-87

When a non-delinquent child unknown to CP&P runs away from a non-CP&P group home or residential facility to another county, the group home or residential facility is responsible for the child's return, including payment whenever possible. The CP&P Local Office in whose jurisdiction the facility is located is responsible for coordinating efforts to return the child, if necessary.

When a non-delinquent child supervised by CP&P runs away from a contracted facility, the Local Office responsible for supervision of the child effects the child's return in cooperation with the group home or residential facility.

Payment to a contracted facility may continue up to fifteen days when good cause is shown in writing and the Local Office approves payment. See [CP&P-VIII-F-1-100](#) regarding method of payment for the return of the child.

Contact with the Child's Parent 11-2-87

When CP&P assumes responsibility for the return of a New Jersey child who has run away from his own home, the child's parent is contacted to notify him that the child has been found and to determine:

- why the child ran away;
- whether returning the child home is an appropriate plan;
- whether the parent will transport the child and/or pay for the child's return;
- whether CP&P services are necessary; and
- whether the family wants CP&P services.

If the child is not already under the supervision of CP&P, and the parent is willing to make full arrangements for the child's return, it is not necessary for CP&P to be involved in the return. When CP&P services are not requested or required, the

SCR Screener completes the Screening Summary, DCF Form [1-1](#), in NJS as “Information and Referral.” See [CP&P-II-C-2-435](#). No further involvement or action is required by CP&P.

When CP&P services are needed or requested on behalf of a child, complete CP&P Form [26-81](#), Family Summary/Case Plan, with the parent. If the parent is unwilling to take responsibility for his child and is unwilling to request CP&P services, seek a court order to authorize services. Consult with the court liaison and DAG to determine the appropriate legal action to take.

If a child runs away while residing in a CP&P supported living arrangement, notify the parent that the child has run away and keep him advised of the situation.

Opening the Case of a Runaway 11-2-87

Open a case on a New Jersey non-delinquent child who runs away within New Jersey when:

- CP&P social services including placement are requested or required; or
- CP&P pays for the child’s return. See [CP&P-VIII-F-1-100](#).

When the Local Office receives a referral that a runaway child from another county has been located, make a determination whether involvement is appropriate.

CP&P involvement is necessary when no individual or agency assumes responsibility for the child.

See [CP&P-II-A-1-100](#), [CP&P-II-C-2-200](#), and [CP&P-III-A-1-100](#) for information on screening, assessment and who may receive services.

Consent to Placement 2-6-2006

Temporary placement may be requested or required on behalf of a New Jersey runaway child. The assigned Worker obtains the appropriate authority to place the child according to the following:

- Obtain a court order, when seeking to place the child in a resource family home. Consult the Litigation Specialist/DAG.
- When a child is placed in a juvenile-family crisis shelter or emergency foster home, or detention facility on the basis of a juvenile-family crisis or out of home placement petition or delinquency complaint, CP&P need not petition the court, because CP&P does not make the placement. These

placements are made by the Court Intake Services. See [CP&P-VIII-F-1-400](#).

- Under the CIU/CP&P/Family Part Agreement, Court Intake arranges for overnight shelter care for an out of county runaway when CP&P cannot arrange to return the child or find another placement. Court Intake files an out of home placement petition with the court, which is withdrawn the next day, if the child is returned to his home county.

Services on Behalf of an Unidentified Runaway 11-2-87

Services including placement may be provided on behalf of an unidentified runaway for a maximum of 72 hours. During this period of time, CP&P makes every effort to identify the child and to locate the child's parent or guardian.

Encourage the child to contact the National Runaway Hotline (800-621-4000) to notify his parent or guardian that he is safe.

CP&P may publish the runaway child's photograph in a newspaper or other public notice only when the child's identity is unknown and only for the purpose of locating the child's parent or guardian.

If, after the 72 hours, the child's identity is still unknown, a court order is necessary to provide services or for placement to continue. Consult with the court liaison and DAG to determine the appropriate court action.

Runaway Shelters 11-2-87

The Federal Runaway Youth Act provides for the establishment of grant funded runaway shelters. The grants are time limited, and the availability of these shelters varies accordingly. CP&P also contracts with these shelters. The Office of Statewide Operations may be contacted for information regarding the current availability of runaway shelters. The Office of Licensing's Residential Child Care Facilities Report lists all shelters.

Payment for the Child's Return 11-2-87

Base the responsibility and the method of payment for the child's return on the child's living arrangement at the time he ran away and whether or not the child is under the supervision of CP&P.

CP&P pays for the return of a child who has run away from a CP&P supported living arrangement.

When a runaway child from another county is located and that child has not run from a CP&P supported living arrangement, contact the parent, guardian,

individual or agency responsible for the child's care and determine the ability and willingness of that party to pay for the child's return.

When the parent cannot or will not pay, and no other individual or agency will assume financial responsibility, CP&P pays for the child's return. CP&P pays for the return of a New Jersey child who runs away within New Jersey only when all other resources have been explored and no other source of funding is available.

The parent is expected to reimburse CP&P for expenditures made on behalf of the runaway child unless the parent is already supporting the child in placement. The parent reimburses CP&P in accordance with CP&P support procedures. See [CP&P-IX-F-1-225](#).

See [CP&P-VIII-F-1-100](#) for a chart outlining who pays for the return of a runaway child and which method of payment is used. When none of the methods on the chart are appropriate to the situation, CP&P may pay for the child's return through the Local Office Bank account. Only use the Local Office Bank account if the child is a CP&P registered case. Make the check out to the vendor.

Compliance with the Child Placement Review Act 11-2-87

Whenever a runaway child requires placement in a CP&P supported living arrangement, in other than a juvenile-family crisis shelter or home and the placement is in excess of three days, the child is under the jurisdiction of the Child Placement Review Act (N.J.S.A. 30:4C-50 et seq.). See [CP&P-IV-A-3-200](#).

Services Following the Child's Return 11-2-87

When services are provided to a New Jersey runaway child not previously known to CP&P, but on whose behalf a case has been opened, services continue upon the return of the child if:

- a need for continued services exists; and
- the parent or guardian requests and is eligible for continued services, or a court order is obtained.

If the child was under CP&P supervision at the time he ran away, services may continue as long as a need for services exists, a well-defined service plan is developed, and the parent is willing for services to continue. In the absence of the parent's willingness, a court order is necessary for continued service provision.

TERMINATION 3-15-2010

No further need for services -- In the absence of a continued need for services, the case is terminated.

Document efforts to locate child -- When a child under CP&P supervision runs away, document in the case record efforts to locate the child.

Child in CP&P custody runs away -- When a child in CP&P custody runs away from any out-of-home placement, the CP&P Worker documents the status of the child in NJ SPIRIT in the Person Management and Placement and Service End Windows. See the chart below for the Person Management Window:

To end the placement because the child ran away, click the placement end reason, "Child ran away less than 6 months." To discharge or end the episode of the child in runaway status, select "Child in runaway status over 6 months."

For a child who runs away from placement, double click here to view the NJ SPIRIT Cheat Sheet, "*Document a Child in Runaway Status."

Court notification required -- If a child is receiving CP&P services under a court order, notify the court in writing that the child has run away.

Location efforts include but are not limited to:

- **Contact the police** to file a missing persons report. Include any known information regarding life-threatening medication the child is on. Determine if the police have any information regarding the child's current whereabouts.
- **Contact relatives and friends.**
- **Consult the Deputy Attorney General** to determine whether court intervention is appropriate.
- **Check the last known address** and inquire if the neighbors and/or the landlord have information, when appropriate.
- **Inquire at child's last place of employment**, if appropriate.
- **Contact the Probation and/or Parole Departments**, if appropriate.

Terminate the case if the child not located in six months unless the case is in litigation.

For cases in active litigation, consult the DAG regarding how long to maintain the litigation and/or warrant before termination.

Send written notification within 30 days of termination to all involved persons, agencies, and courts.

Court notification required -- If a standing court order is applicable to the child, prior notification of the court is necessary for termination. See the Termination of Court Orders section in [CP&P-VIII-F-1-600](#).

Guardianship cases -- If a child sixteen years or older is under the guardianship of CP&P and remains missing for six months, a recommendation for discharge of the child from guardianship may be made to the Local Office Manager.

Requirements for Guardianship cases remaining open -- If it is decided by the LO Manager that the case remains open, renewed efforts to locate the child must occur every three months until:

- The child is located, or
- The child reaches age 18, or
- A recommendation is approved to discharge the child from guardianship.

See the Discretionary Discharge section of [CP&P-IV-A-10-100](#).

Document location efforts -- in the case record.

Procedures Related to the Return of a New Jersey Runaway Child within the Boundaries of New Jersey **2-6-2006**

Responsibility	Action Required
Worker	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Encourage an unidentified child to contact the National Runaway Hotline.2. Refer the child to an agency other than CP&P who is responsible for the child and coordinate the child's return as needed.3. When CP&P is responsible for the child, determine<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. which Local Office is responsible for the child's return, and/orb. the responsibilities of other Local Offices or other

	<p>agencies involved with the child.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Contact the child's parent to determine: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. his willingness and ability to arrange and pay for the child's return; b. the reason the child ran away; c. the need for services, what specific services are needed, and the plan for the child; and d. the parent's willingness to consent to any needed services. 5. Update NJS as appropriate. 6. Determine that placement is necessary and obtain a court order to authorize out-of-home placement. 7. Determine that services are needed and complete CP&P Form 26-81, Family Summary/Case Plan, signed by the parent or guardian. 8. Determine who will return the child and facilitate the return. 9. Determine responsibility and method for paying for the child's return. 10. Make all appropriate efforts to obtain funds for the child's return and document these efforts in the case record. 11. Determine that it is appropriate for CP&P to pay for the child's return, and complete PV 6/93, CP&P Form K-100, or use the LO Bank account. 12. Notify Support Specialist of expenditures related to the return of the runaway child.
Support Specialist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Notify the Office of Revenue and Financial Reporting of any reimbursement owed to CP&P and completes the support evaluation of legally responsible persons.
Worker	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Comply with the requirements of the Child Placement Review Act when appropriate. 15. Determine eligibility and provide services based on a service plan upon the child's return if requested or required.
Worker/Supervisor/ Local Office	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Terminate the case when services are no longer needed or when the child is no longer eligible for services.

Manager	
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